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and choose the prints for himself, and if he would copy them neatly, I would give him some more another day;" away he scampered, with a look of triumph at his sister Patty.

This trifling present of mine has made Sam an artist,—fool that I am;—the great Father of the Universe had given him, long before, all the *germs* necessary for such an art; they only needed *conditions*, such as sunshine, and warmth and moisture, to the plant to make them shoot and grow: I, by mere chance (is there such a thing?) or rather with the wish to keep the child quiet in his mother's room, by giving him amusement, had caused this *vital principle of genius* to swell within him and put forth its first pale leaf.

"Go on with your story, my good woman," said I.

"I know it was wrong for my unhappy child to do this," continued poor Susan, but he is very young, and this is his first offence; they carried him off to Newgate, sir, where he is keeping company with thieves and pickpockets, and he is getting as hard as Turpin. A *child* should not be taken to Newgate, sir."

"Have you been to plead with Mr. Platt, the barrister, his master?" I inquired.

"Oh yes, your honor, and that is what has made me now so very ill. It was a very wet day, and I stood shivering in the office passage, in my wet things, for more than an hour, crying like the rain; but he would not see me: all the answer I could get was through his servant, who was very rude to me, and at last shut the door in my face."

"What was the answer?" inquired I; "surely the sins of the children are not to be thrown back upon the parents; it is hard enough, methinks, the other way."

"He sent me word that my son was an ungrateful, dishonest young vagabond, and that the sooner he was sent over the water the better; he should not stir a finger to save him from transportation, and so the law must take its course."

(To be Continued.)

[From the "Saturday Review."]

THE ITALIAN OPERAS.

The opening night at Her Majesty's Theatre promised well. The opera was "Le Nozze di Figaro" of Mozart, the distribution of characters in which, with one important and two unimportant exceptions, is certainly stronger and more generally efficient than at the other house. To name at once the exceptions, and to begin with the exception of most consequence—the Cherubino of Madame Demerle Lablache is in no sense comparable with the Cherubino of Mdlle. Lucca. Mdlle. Lucca's Cherubino sins occasionally on the side of extravagance, and, indeed, is over-acted throughout. But, on the other hand, there is a certain charm about it, as there is about every impersonation of Mdlle. Lucca's Cherubino more especially, which, as in some of the inimitable caricatures of Ronconi, not only compels forgiveness, but stimulates interest. Now, Madame Lablache over-acts Cherubino just as much as Mdlle. Lucca—more, perhaps, on the whole—without exhibiting that charm which compels forgiveness and stimulates interest. Moreover, Mdlle. Lucca, being a soprano, sings the two airs, "Non so più cosa son," and "Voi che sapete," in Mozart's own keys, while Mdlle. Lablache being a contralto, does not, and for the matter of that, cannot. What is lost by the transposition of those beautiful songs to keys considerably lower in pitch, not merely of brightness in the vocal part, but of rich coloring in the accompaniments for the orchestra, need scarcely be insisted on. Waiving these special objections, however, Madame Lablache has none of the indispensable requisites for such a character as the amorous Page of Beaumarchais, Da Ponte, and Mozart. The unimportant exceptions are the Basilio of Mr. Charles Lyall, and the Antonio of Signor Casaboni. Mr. Lyall, it is true, might fairly be

preferred to Signor Neri-Baraldi, if he did not omit the air, "In quegli anni," and thus reduce Basilio almost to musical insignificance. Signor Polonini's drunken Gardener, however, is, as we have said, a bit of genuine comedy; while the drunken Gardener of Signor Casaboni is a nonentity. In the remaining characters, excepting Marcellina, played by Madame Tagliafico, who may pair off with Madame Anese at Covent Garden, the advantage is greatly on the side of Her Majesty's Theatre. The Susanna of Mdlle. Sinico is a real and sprightly bit of life; and though the voice of this clever lady is not equal to the voice of Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, her singing is marked by qualities which may be sought for in vain in the singing of her rival at the other house. The Countess of Mdlle. Tietjens, and the Count of Mr. Santley, are probably, at the time being, unequalled on the Italian stage. Mdlle. Fricci could ill support a comparison with the first, and Signor Graziani as ill support a comparison with the last. It must be admitted that Mr. Santley does not greatly shine as an actor, but Signor Graziani is even less gifted with histrionic talent, although with most of his impersonations, he makes, in this respect, an emphatic exhibition of incapacity. To conclude, the Figaro of Signor Gassier is on the whole better than the Figaro of M. Petit—as a genuine Italian operatic Figaro is nearly always better than a French one. The orchestra at both houses is admirable—that of Covent Garden, if we are forced to weigh their respective claims, being, for various reasons, entitled to the palm, and Mr. Costa showing a more classical taste than Signor Arlitti, in adhering with closer reverence to the original score, restoring the *jandango*, the omission of which at Her Majesty's Theatre destroys the symmetry of the third *finale*, and giving the opera not in two acts, but in four, according to the plan of Mozart. On the other hand, the chorus at Her Majesty's Theatre evinces a marked superiority over that at Covent Garden, in "Figaro" as in every other opera. The singers at the old house are for the most part young, with strong fresh voices; while those at the other, however, apt and experienced, are in the majority of instances what, in the language of the Turf, is termed "aged." As far as the *mise en scene* is concerned, it would be hard to say at which house it is the least showy. Comparisons, under the circumstances, are unavoidable, and may be found the less out of place now, inasmuch as we have nothing to add to the descriptions of either "Figaro" which appeared in the *Saturday Review* at the end of last season. It is curious, though to real amateurs not surprising, that an opera composed by a German musician so far back as 1786, should eighty years later be a sort of test of capacity between the two great London Italian lyric theatres; and the more curious because, on account of the unusual number of responsible characters, it is one of the most difficult of all operas to present efficiently. Mozart, however, is evidently in the ascendant. Only the other night (Thursday) at Covent Garden, "Don Giovanni," in consequence of the indisposition of Mdlle. Adelina Patti, being withdrawn, "Le Nozze di Figaro" was readily accepted in lieu of it by a crowded house, which seemed to take consolation, in the delicious melodies that abound in every scene, for the disappointment of not hearing the most popular singer of the day in the most popular opera of all time.

What can have tempted Mr. Mapleson to revive such a work as "I Lombardi" it is not easy to guess. The earlier operas of Signor Verdi have little in them that is enduring. "Oberto," his first, made a noise for a time; and some enthusiastic friends of the composer proclaimed "a new Rossini!" But the utter failure, a year later, of its immediate successor, "Un Giorno di Regno," dissipated for a while the magnificent hopes that had been built upon the shadowy pretensions of "Oberto." To speak truth, there was very little in either of them to justify great expectations. Nor can we believe that the third opera of the most popular representative of "Young Italy" will survive.

Its composer is now in the plenitude of his fame, and yet no one ever hears of it. We allude to "Nabucodonosor," first brought forward in 1842, the libretto of which was written by one Solera, who had in vain endeavored to persuade the German, Otto Nicolai (then in Italy), author of the opera known to frequenters of Her Majesty's Theatre as "Falstaff," to set it to music. It just suited young Verdi, however, and those who can remember "Nino," at Her Majesty's Theatre (1846), and "Anato," at the Royal Italian Opera (1850), must still have some echoes of the "sound and fury signifying nothing" in their mind's ear. To "Nabucodonosor-Nino-Anato" succeeded "I Lombardi alla prima Crociata," the libretto for which was concocted by this same Solera, from a poem by Grossi, who really ought to have a new edition now that the opera his pages inspired has been thought worthy of revival. "I Lombardi" met with an enormous success at the Scala, at Milan, where it was first represented in February, 1843; but we very much doubt whether a traveller disposed to spend a couple of years in visiting every considerable or inconsiderable Italian city (all Italian cities can boast a lyric theatre) would have the slightest chance of hearing it now. In Paris, four years later, it made a complete *fiasco*, at the Grand Opera, where it was performed, with modifications and additions, under the name of "Jerusalem." Duprez played the principal character; but it was of little avail; the last tones of a once noble voice were effectively silenced by "Jerusalem" and the "Tu mens, tu mens, tu mens!"—which, during a short space, was a byword in the streets of Paris, and which the great French tenor of the "Ut de poitrine" used to shriek rather than sing, so utterly exhausted was he by his previous exertions. The two attempts at gaining popularity for "I Lombardi" made by Mr. Lumley, the most enterprising operatic *impresario* of the century—in 1846, with Grisi, Mario, and Fornasari, and in 1850, with a new tenor, since, in spite of his beautiful voice, forgotten—were both failures. And no wonder. The book is as rambling; improbable, and absurd as anything of the sort could well be; and though even at that period Verdi was not infrequently visited with an original tune, sure to find its way to the street-organs, "I Lombardi," with the exception of one or two pretty melodies, a chorus of Crusaders, and a prayer, in unison almost throughout, then as now a favorite peculiarity of the composer, contains no more genuine music than "Nabucodonosor" and its predecessors—much less, in fact, than "Ernani," Verdi's fifth opera, which, though by no means a great opera, was far superior to anything he had previously given to the world. Our morning contemporaries have been at such commendable pains to narrate, as intelligibly as it was in their power, the plot of "I Lombardi," that, supposing opera-loving readers have already mastered it in all its incoherent details, we shall be charitable enough to afflict them with no more than an outline. More utterly uninteresting personages than the two Lombard brothers, Arvino and Pagano—Arvino the successful, Pagano the unsuccessful wooer of a certain Viclinda, as uninteresting as either of them—could not well be imagined. Pagano, at any rate, has some force of character. Disappointed of Viclinda he stabs Arvino, and supposing the blow to be fatal, flies the country. The wound, however, not being mortal, Pagano, after a protracted exile, is allowed to return, and the good Arvino, with the approval of the no less excellent Viclinda, receives him with open arms. The reprobate, however, is reprobate still, and, in the prosecution of a plot to carry away Viclinda, murders his own father, the extenuating circumstance being that the blow was meant for his brother. Pagano would scorn to be a parricide; but to be a fratricide, so that his purpose were effected (that of abducting his brother's wife), he would not so much mind. Learning the real nature of his crime, he retreats again, and, taking refuge in a wilderness in Palestine, repents, becomes hermit, vegetates in a cave,

does good service to the Crusaders, and eventually rescues his brother's daughter, Giselda, from the harem of a certain Oronte, son of the Governor of Antioch. Giselda, however, having fallen in love with Oronte, thinks rather of converting her *innamorato* to the true faith than of leaving him. Her wish is accomplished somewhat later. Antioch being besieged and taken by Arvino, Oronte and Giselda escape together. Oronte, in the flight, is pursued and mortally wounded; but conducted by Pagano to his hermit's abode, he dies there, a Christian—thanks to the united persuasions of his lover and the repentant parricide. Giselda is consoled by a vision which shows that, owing to her successful advocacy, Oronte has been admitted into Paradise. Pagano receives his death-wound in the act of saving the life of his injured brother, at the siege of Jerusalem.

When we repeat that *I Larmido* contains an air for the tenor (Oronte), "La mia letizia," one or two spirited though by no means well-written choruses, short, abrupt, noisy, and generally in unison, a somewhat tortured prayer for Giselda, with occasional passages of less importance, we have said all that can justly be said in favor of the music in what is decidedly one of Verdi's worst operas and one of the worst operas ever composed. The performance, however, at Her Majesty's Theatre—now that Signor Mongini has taken the place of Mr. Hobler, in the part of Oronte, for the adequate representation of which the English tenor was scarcely competent—is generally so good, that stupid as is the libretto, and empty as is the music for the most part, the thing is worth at least a hearing. Perhaps no more ungratefully laborious a part exists in the lyric drama than that of Giselda; but those who take pleasure in seeing how difficulties may be overcome by art and resolution combined, can hardly do better than go and listen to Mdlle. Tietjens. The effect she makes out of her music is nothing short of wonderful. Not less remarkable is the indomitable perseverance and eminent ability with which Mr. Santley grapples with the music of that most detestable personage—repentant sinner though he be—Pagano. There is hardly a phrase in the whole that is really and in the genuine sense musical. But as Dædalus essayed the empty air with wings, and

Perrupit Acheronta Hercules labor, so do these true artists, struggling with the difficulties of *I Lombardi*, exemplify the Horatian rule that *nil mortalibus arduum est*. As much, indeed, may be said for Signor Mongini, who, nevertheless, at any rate, has one melody to sing ("La mia letizia"). The other characters are extremely well supported. What can possibly be made out of Arvino is well made out by Signor Tasca, a tenor with a voice worth cultivating more assiduously; and the subordinate part of Pirro, Pagano's confidant, is admirably sustained by that very generally useful and efficient singer, Signor Gassier. Signor Tasca interpolates an exceedingly dull *scena* from "Giovanna d'Arco"—another opera by Verdi (his seventh*), written to a libretto for which the already-named Solera found materials in a pastoral poem by Domrémy, and produced, without success, at the Scala (Milan), in 1845; but, for the impression it creates, this *scena* might as well be omitted. The character of Violinda could hardly meet with a more docile representative than Mdlle. Corsi. "I Lombardi" is effectively placed upon the stage; the costumes are for the most part appropriate, and the scenery of Mr. Telbin is picturesque. Nor is anything left undone that can possibly be done for the musical *ensemble* by Signor Ardit. Notwithstanding all this, it is useless to hope that so feeble a work can much longer hold its position.

The return of Signor Mongini has greatly satisfied the frequenters of Her Majesty's Theatre. His second appearance was in the "Trovatore," about which inevitable revival, season after season, it is unnecessary to offer one word beyond

the mere statement that never has the music of Manrico been declaimed with more splendid vigor than by the gentleman whose voice now stands pre-eminent among "robust tenors." Of course the Leonora was Mdlle. Tietjens, and the Conte di Luna Mr. Santley. There was also a new Azucena—Mdlle. Eracleo—who is not likely to be heard again. We have had, too, one performance of the "Huguenots," with Mdlle. Tietjens as Valentine, Signor Tasca as Raoul, Herr Rokitski as Marcel, perhaps the best—if a splendid *basso profundo*, one of the deepest and richest in quality since the prime of Herr Formes, and a fair dramatic talent may count—now to be obtained; Mdlle. Sinico, to whom every possible character in the operatic repertory seems to come readily, as the Queen; Signor Gassier as St. Bris; Mr. Santley as Nevers; and another unknown lady, Mdlle. Martelli—*prima donna contratto assoluta* at the San Carlo Theatre, Lisbon, but not at all likely ever to support the same dignity at Her Majesty's Theatre, London—as Urbain, the page. "Der Freischütz" has equally been played once, with Mdlle. Tietjens as Agatha, Mdlle. Sinico as Annchen, Signor Gassier (why not Mr. Santley?) as Caspar, and Signor Tasca (Signor Mongini being indisposed) as Max. This was by no means such a performance of Weber's masterpiece as we have been accustomed to at Her Majesty's Theatre. About the very recent revival of Otto Nicolai's "Falstaff" (on Thursday night) we shall speak in a future article. There are several changes in the cast of the *dramatis personæ*, each of which merits consideration apart.

Meanwhile, at Her Majesty's Theatre the re-appearance of Mdlle. Ilma de Murska, and the advent of the new singer, Mdlle. Christine Nilsson (from the Théâtre Lyrique), are anxiously looked forward to; while at the Royal Italian Opera the novelties anticipated with most interest are the new operas of Verdi and Gounod—"Don Carlos" and "Romeo et Juliette" (with Mdlle. Patti as Juliet, and Signor Mario as Romeo).

ART PRIZES AT THE PARIS EXPOSITION.

In an interesting letter from Paris, written, we understand, by Parke Godwin, and printed in the *Post*, we find some very pertinent criticisms upon the management of the affair. The prizes offered consisted of eight grand medals—fifteen first class, twenty second class, and twenty-four third class medals.

The medals of honor were awarded to Meissonnier, Gérôme, Theodore Rousseau, and Cabanel, French; to Leys, Belgian; Knaus, Prussian; Kaulbach, Bavarian; and Ussi, Italian.

The fifteen *premieres prix*, or first prizes, were given to Pils, Fromentin, Bida, Francois, R. Fleury, Daubigny, Jules Bréton, Millet, French; Horschelt and Piloty, Bavarian; A. Stevens and Wilhems, Belgian; Matejko, Austrian; Rosales, Spanish; Calderon, English.

The twenty *deuxiemes prix*, or second prizes, were given to Sigismund L'Allemand, (*jeune*), Austrian; Bonnat, Brion, Rosa Bonheur, Corot, Delaunay, Dupré, Hamon, Hebert, Jalabert, Yvon, all French; to F. E. Church, American; Claes, Belgian; Gude, Norwegian; Morelli, Italian; Menzel, Prussian; Nicol, English; Palmarioli, Spaniard; Jadema, Hollander; Vautier, Swiss.

The twenty-four *troisiemes prix*, or third prizes, were given to Achenbach, Prussian; F. Adam, Bavarian; Bergh, Swede; H. Baron, Bouguereau, Belly, Buss, n., Cabat, Vetter, Couzon, Levy, Chavannes, Comte, all French; and to Fagerlin, Swede; Faruffini, Italy; Gisbert and Gonsalvo, Spain; Braels, Pays Bas; Kotzebue, Russia; Leubach, Bavaria; Orchardson, England; Pagli-

ano, Italy; Wurzinger, Austria; Walker, England.

Of the sixty-seven medals the French take thirty-two; the Prussians three; the Austrians three; the Pays Bas two; the Belgians four; the Bavarians five; the Spaniards four; the Italians four; the Englishmen four; the Russians one; the Swedes two; the Swiss one; the Americans one; the Norwegians one.

The jury on sculpture is reported to have made a *mention honorable* of Ward for his statue of the "Indian Hunter," but the Imperial Commission has refused to permit any *mention honorable*, just as they refused the request of the jury on painting to divide the same amount of money among more medals. Of the twenty-six judges, twelve were Frenchmen, and no less than eight were artists, who were also competitors for the prizes. Is it surprising that thirty-two out of sixty-seven medals were given to Frenchmen; that eight of these—four grand medals and four first medals—were voted to the very artists who composed part of the jury? In our country the law prohibits a man from being a judge in his own case, interpreting the instinctive sense of all persons of delicate and honorable feeling; but Messieurs, Meissonnier, Gérôme, Rousseau, Cabanel, Fromentin, Bida, Francois and Pils do not seem to be actuated by any such scruples. They boldly declare that they are themselves the best painters in the world; vote themselves half of the grand medals, and distribute half of the others to their colleagues. In my opinion, not one of the French artists who received medals of honor is fit to be ranked in the highest class. They have all very great technical skill, I admit; they are all masters of manipulation; and some of them have an exquisite feeling for color; but not one of them has exhibited a first-class picture—that is a picture combining the essential qualities of a great work. These qualities are: 1. Subject; 2. Composition; 3. Drawing; 4. Color; and, 5. Technical skill; and a picture, in order to be a really great picture, must unite them all, more or less, in a grand and harmonious whole. Now, Meissonnier is a mere *genre* painter, noted for the extreme delicacy and minuteness of his touch, but whose works never move any sentiment but that of surprise, and, perhaps, admiration of his dexterity. His merit is of the same kind that we admire in the lace worker who knits a thousand threads in the space of an inch, or of the gold-worker who constructs an entire watch of about the size of a pea. I find no grand idea in what he does, no grand sentiment, no composition, no broad conceptions of life and nature, no dramatic dignity, nothing but an excessively minute handling of form and color to portray an excessively insignificant subject. Gérôme has attempted higher things than Meissonnier; his "Death of Cæsar," his "Gladiators," his "Duel after the Ball," his "Muezzin," his "Prayer in the Desert," and his "Prisoner," have strong touches of sentiment; but, for the most part, his subjects are unpleasant and repulsive; and his chief merits, like that of Meissonnier, are technical. His drawing is, to the last degree, faithful, and his handling wonderfully delicate, clear, and vigorous. But who wants to see such graces of art applied to a Phryné before the tribunal; to the "Alma;" to a Turkish butcher, with his liver and lights hanging on the wall; to a mosque of Et-Assaneyn, with a heap of immolated heads blocking the door-step, or to Roman augurs, swollen with wine and leering like gross, vulgar

* "Ernani" was his fifth, and "I due Foscari" his sixth.